

***The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology.*** Edited by Wolfgang Vondey. New York, NY: Routledge, 2020. 464 pp.

Wolfgang Vondey, as editor, has set out to accomplish a mountainous task in which he aims to synthesize the uniqueness of Pentecostal theology and fill the many gaps in the field. Rather than presenting a standardized theology, this compilation has gathered numerous authors to create a launching pad and reference for scholars and theologians for future studies. The organization of this handbook is truly well-done. Vondey brought about a thematic approach to Pentecostal theology in five main parts of the volume, utilizing various authors to highlight specific areas of theological framework, sourcing, methods, practices, and challenges.

Part I appears as a crux of this book, creating a formative undertone for the groundwork of Pentecostal theology. In his Introduction, Wolfgang Vondey adequately terms this vast discussion as an “unfolding narrative” (2) that delves into its diversity. Christopher Stephenson (Chapter 1) emphasizes that this handbook reflects the diversity of Pentecostal origins, delimiting the base reality that “there is no such thing as an ‘ideal’ or ‘pure’ Pentecostal theology” (16). As Allan Anderson (Chapter 2) denounces the possibilities of “universal statements of Pentecostal theology” (22), he also conveys the thematic necessities of such Pentecostal expressions of music and dance within the church, describing the identifying factor in the joyous expression of Pentecostal worship. As a narrative, articulated by Kenneth Archer (Chapter 4), Pentecostal theology takes on the historical and current identities of its storytellers, relating experience, testimony, song, and dance as an engaging mission-oriented life “grounded in the story of God told in the Scriptures” (48).

Part II focuses on the main spiritual, physical, and mental sources of the Pentecostal church. The source of revelation, unpacked by Rickie Moore (Chapter 5), as transformative and altering in and of itself, is likened to the transformative power of the flames upon the disciples’ heads at Pentecost and the wonder-filled experience of the Pentecostal believer. Continuing the narrative theme, Scott Ellington (Chapter 6) portrays the source of Scripture as personally relevant to the Pentecostal believer, who becomes one with the narrative of the Word of God through the divine revelation of the Holy Spirit. Through the source of reason, William Kay (Chapter 7) encourages empirical research for the furtherance of Pentecostal theology. The experience of God (Chapter 8) and the struggle of tradition (Chapter 9) provide key elements for Pentecostal development and understanding. Attention to culture (Chapter 10) and worship (Chapter 11) define the movement, just as expressive movement and embodiment bring reflexivity to Pentecostal theology.

Part III portrays the theological methods in place within the Pentecostal movement. Jacqueline Grey and William Oliverio describe the essentials of biblical hermeneutics (Chapter 12) and theological hermeneutics (Chapter 13) and look at their continued development within the global Pentecostal community. In his discourse on pneumatological imagination (Chapter 14), Amos Yong rethinks the method of Pentecostal theology. Yong believes Pentecostal methods need adjustment because of changes in voices in the current “public square” (160). Similarly driven, Mark Cartledge (Chapter 15) focuses on the pneumatological praxis in practical theology, voicing the importance of the development in this field of study in coming years. Wolfgang Vondey finishes this section with a complete overview of the liturgical hermeneutic of the “full gospel” methodological framework (Chapter 16).

Part IV introduces the reader to fourteen subjects of doctrine and practices within Pentecostal churches. Part V contains twelve fringe theologies that require much more development and discussion, yet they are still a vital part of the movement. Some of the theologies discussed in Part IV are divergent, such as Trinitarian and Oneness doctrines. In contrast, some of the theologies discussed in Part IV are more integral to Pentecostal beliefs, such as salvation (Chapter 21), Spirit baptism (Chapter 23), divine healing (Chapter 24), eschatology (Chapter 25), and missiology (Chapter 26).

Part V introduces Pentecostal theologies that remain under construction. These theological themes touch on such issues as ecotheology (Chapter 33), economics (Chapter 34), feminism (Chapter 36), social justice (Chapter 40), and science (Chapter 42). Along these lines, one can only imagine what other theologies of life, practice, or passion may be relevant to the Pentecostal conversation narrative. Steven Félix-Jäger’s chapter about arts and aesthetics (Chapter 31) is particularly interesting. Félix-Jäger delves into the form of theological aesthetics from a Pentecostal perspective, in which the use of art forms like dance, music, visual arts, film, and architecture reflect the pneumatological approach to embodied worship through aesthetics and evangelism.

Several recurring themes run the book’s scope, the greatest being the idea of Pentecostal theology as a *narrative*. Recognizing the uniqueness of Pentecostalism, the *fluid* nature, the *newness* of Pentecostalism, the *pneumatological* emphasis, and the theme of *embodiment* through worship all reveal that the movement has room to grow and adapt to new revelations and narratives as voices arise globally in different contexts and cultures. The strongest voice spoken in this handbook remains the formulation of Pentecostal theology articulated from within Pentecostalism itself. A fundamental gap in this handbook is the lack of cultural representation from the global Pentecostal community. To this void, the writers seem to be aware, prodding further responses from scholarship relevant to the contexts at hand and the contexts in growth. Wonderfully added throughout the handbook are the regular references to other chapters within each

essay. This gives an overarching sense of unity throughout the book, despite its varying authors, perspectives, and emphases.

It was undoubtedly a difficult task, taming the wild and unfettered construct of the Pentecostal movement in an attempt to name its theologies, hermeneutics, practices, doctrines, and heartbeat. Yet, the handbook is impressive. I anticipate that many other handbooks will emerge in its wake, picking up the conversation, continuing the narrative, and emboldening the many voices of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement to rise to the occasion and write their part of the story.

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